

nondemocratic nation, in my view, would be a big mistake.

This country stands for freedom and democracy. We're fighting like crazy to preserve it in countries where it is very difficult to do so, where people literally put their lives on the line every day for freedom. And when people are out there risking their lives, we ought not to send the wrong signal about how important that is to us.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 157th news conference began at 2 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to one of his private attorneys, David E. Kendall; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr and Deputy Independent Counsel W. Hickman Ewing, Jr.; Abigail Thernstrom, senior fellow, Manhattan Institute; Ward Connerly, chairman, American Civil Rights Institute; and Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada.

Statement on Senate Ratification of the Protocols of Accession to NATO for Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic

April 30, 1998

I am delighted that the Senate voted by an overwhelming margin to admit Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO. This vote is a major milestone on the road to an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe. The addition of these three democracies to our alliance will strengthen NATO, expand the zone of stability in Europe and reduce the chances American men and women will ever again be called into Europe's fields of battle. The message this vote sends is clear: American support for NATO is firm; our leadership for security on both sides of the Atlantic is strong; and there

is a solid, bipartisan foundation for an active U.S. role in the world.

I want to pay tribute to the indispensable efforts of the many leaders from both parties who brought us to this day, starting with Majority Leader Lott and Minority Leader Daschle. This vote stands in the tradition of Harry Truman, George Marshall, and Arthur Vandenberg and the other giants who kept America engaged in the world after World War II and were present at NATO's creation. Their lesson then is our lesson tonight—that our strength lies in a foreign policy guided by the interests and values that unite us as Americans.

Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion With Employees of Therma, Inc., in San Jose, California

May 1, 1998

The President. Thank you very much. I want to thank Joe and Nicki for welcoming me here. I want to thank Dan Kirby for the tour through the operations. He did a great job. Thanks to Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren and Mayor Susan Hammer, my good friends, for joining me here today. I thank the labor leaders that are here, Amy Dean, Ray Lancaster, Mark Van Den Heuvel, Steve Preminger. But most of all, I thank all of you for giving me a chance to leave

Washington and come out and visit the real world. It's great. Thank you very much.

Before I say a little more about why I came here today, I'd like to make a brief comment on something very important to your future that did happen in Washington, DC, late last night. Last night an overwhelming bipartisan majority of 80 Members of the United States Senate voted for a treaty that will permit us to bring Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into the NATO military alliance.